

REMARKS

The Official Action dated April 15, 2005 has been received and its contents carefully noted. In view thereof, claims 1-4 have been canceled in their entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Accordingly, claims 5-9 are presently pending in the instant application.

Initially, Applicants wish to acknowledge the Examiner's indication that claims 7-9 are allowable over the prior art of record, that claims 3 and 4 have been objected to as being dependent upon rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims and that claims 5 and 6 have been objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75 as being substantially duplicates of other pending claims but would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejection. In this regard, as can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claims 1-4 have been canceled in their entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Therefore, it is respectfully submitted that claims 5-9 previously indicated as being allowable over the prior art of record by the Examiner are now in proper condition for allowance.

With reference now to the Official Action and particularly paragraph 1 thereof, claim 1 has been objected to as including minor informalities. As can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claim 1 has been canceled and consequently further discussion with respect thereto is no longer believed to be warranted.

With reference to paragraphs 2 -4 of the Official Action, claims 5 and 6 have been objected to as under 37 C.F.R. §1.75 as being substantial duplicates of claims 3 and 4 respectively. Again, as can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claims 3 and 4 have been canceled in their entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth

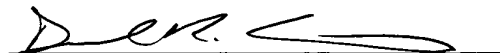
therein. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 5 and 6 are now in proper condition for allowance.

With respect to paragraph 7 of the Office Action, claims 1 and 2 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Japanese Patent Publication No. 2002-364238 in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,220,650 issued to Davies, et al. Again, as can be seen from the foregoing amendments, claims 1 and 2 have been canceled in their entirety without prejudice nor disclaimer of the subject matter set forth therein. Accordingly, further discussion with respect to the merits of the rejection of claims 1 and 2 is no longer believed to be warranted.

Therefore, in view of the foregoing it is respectfully requested that the objections and rejections of record be reconsidered and withdrawn by the Examiner, that claims 5-9 be allowed and that the application be passed to issue.

Should the Examiner believe a conference would be of benefit in expediting the prosecution of the instant application, he is hereby invited to telephone counsel to arrange such a conference.

Respectfully submitted,



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